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FEC MAIL CENTER

October 24, 2012

Mr. Jeff S. Jordan  
Supervisory Attorney  
Complaints Examination & Legal Administration  
Federal Election Commission  
999 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20463

RE: MUR 6651

Dear Mr. Jordan:

This letter responds on behalf of Romney for President, Inc. and Darrell Crate, in his official capacity as Treasurer of Romney for President, Inc., to the Complaint filed by Brian Rothenberg of Progress Ohio and assigned MUR 6651. The Complaint is premised on misstatements of both fact and law and it should be summarily dismissed.

#### Facts

On August 14, 2012, Romney for President, Inc. ("RFP") hosted a campaign event at the Century Mine in Beallsville, Ohio. More than 2,000 guests, including local leaders and mine workers and their families, attended the event. RFP paid for all expenses associated with the planning and production of the event, which was held in the mine parking lot and was free to all attendees. RFP staff have been informed that keeping the mine open during the event would have been a safety hazard; the typical emergency equipment and vehicles were displaced as a result of the crowd.

RFP staff did not observe any evidence that Murray Energy Corporation ("Murray Energy") employees' attendance at the event was coerced. Indeed, the news stories filed by reporters freely roaming among the crowd noted that the workers were enthusiastically supportive of Governor Romney. See, e.g., Marc Kovac, *Beallsville crowd sides with Romney*, DAILY RECORD, Aug. 15, 2012, at A1 (noting that "the mine yard was filled mostly with Romney supporters showing little love for the incumbent"); *Romney: 'This Is a Time for Truth' About Coal*, THE STATE JOURNAL, Aug. 17, 2012, at 5 ("Romney was applauded by hundreds of coal miners and their families") (Attachments A and B).

The Complaint alleges that "Murray Energy coerced its employees to attend the Romney rally, essentially forcing these employees to make a contribution to a candidate in violation of 29 [sic] CFR Section 114.2(f)(iv)." In addition, the Complaint alleges that the workers' attendance constituted "something of value given from Murray Energy to the Romney campaign, which is a prohibited corporate contribution under 29 [sic] CFR 114.2." These allegations have no basis in fact or law.

Romney for President, Inc. | PO Box 149756, Boston, MA 02114-9756 | MITTROMNEY.COM

Paid for by Romney for President, Inc.

## Legal Analysis

### *A. No Corporate Contribution Was Made Or Accepted.*

Progress Ohio's allegation that the workers' attendance at the August 14, 2012 event is a prohibited corporate contribution from Murray Energy to RFP is simply wrong.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended ("FECA") defines the term "contribution" as including "any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money or *anything of value* made by any person for the purpose of influencing any election for Federal office." 2 U.S.C. § 431(8)(A)(i) (emphasis added). Similarly, the types of corporate contributions prohibited by 11 CFR 114.2 are defined in the regulations as "any direct or indirect payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money, or any services, or *anything of value*." 11 CFR 114.1(a)(1) (emphasis added).

"Anything of value" is treated as a term of art meaning "in-kind contribution," described as follows:

[T]he provision of any goods or services without charge or at a charge that is less than the usual and normal charge for such goods or services is a contribution. Examples of such goods or services include, but are not limited to: Securities, facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, advertising services, membership lists, and mailing lists.

11 CFR 100.52(d)(1). In-kind contributions of goods are valued at "the price of those goods in the market from which they ordinarily would have been purchased at the time of the contribution," and donated services are valued at "the hourly or piecework charge for the services at a commercially reasonable rate prevailing at the time the services were rendered." 11 CFR 100.52(d)(2). The regulation expressly exempts services "provided by an unpaid volunteer" from the definition of "in-kind contribution." *Id.*

Event attendance is not an in-kind contribution because it has no commercial value. While RFP was pleased to receive a warm reception by the guests at the event, the workers' attendance there does not qualify as "anything of value." The regulations instead state that a good or service must come from a recognized market to be treated as "anything of value." Specifically, it must have *commercial* value. The miners' attendance has no objective market value since supporters cannot be purchased on the market.

In short, Progress Ohio's reading of the law is nonsensical. Indeed, as the Commission is aware, the regulations expressly permit candidate speeches to employees on corporate premises. *See* 11 CFR 114.4(b)(ii).

*B. Section 114.2(f)(2)(iv) Is Not Applicable.*

Progress Ohio's allegation that Murray Energy violated 11 CFR 114.2(f)(2)(iv) is also wrong. To violate that regulation, a corporation must have improperly urged an individual to make a "contribution" or engage in fundraising activities on behalf of a candidate or political committee. No such allegation is made in the Complaint, and RFP observed no conduct whatsoever that would constitute a violation of section 114.2(f)(2)(iv).

*C. Events Such As This Are Commonplace.*

The Complaint also lacks any basis in common sense or experience. Americans do not become campaign contributors merely by attending a campaign event. Campaigns are not required to report event attendance to the FEC or to assess the monetary value of attendance as they must assess and report the monetary value of in-kind contributions.

Factory tours and site visits are a staple of presidential politics. Unsurprisingly, Governor Romney is not the only current or former presidential candidate who has held such an event attended by workers. Since officially announcing his reelection campaign in April 2011, President Obama has addressed workers at dozens of factories and plants in key battleground states. The following is a representative sample:

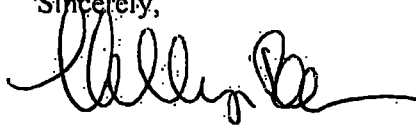
1. In February 2012, President Obama visited Master Lock's plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A local news story about the president's visit noted that "[t]o prepare for Obama's visit, Master Lock idled machinery and moved much of it out of the way to make room for a temporary stage and risers." John Schmid, *Obama visits Master Lock to celebrate return of jobs*, MILWAUKEE J. SENTINEL, Feb. 15, 2012 (Attachment C).
2. That same month, President Obama's running mate, Joe Biden, spoke to "hundreds of workers at American Seating" in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A local television station covering the campaign-style event reported that "[n]early 200 employees attended the event, putting down their tools and equipment for the morning." Lindsay Kus, *Vice President Biden Tours GR Company; Talks Insourcing*, FOX17ONLINE.COM (Feb. 1, 2012, 9:28 AM), available at <http://www.fox17online.com/news/fox17-vice-president-biden-tours-gr-company-20120201.0.6637633.story> (Attachment D).
3. Similarly, the President's March 2012 remarks to workers at the Daimler truck plant in North Carolina halted work at the factory, but workers were "paid even for the time the line was shut down." Mary C. Curtis, *N.C. factory workers on Obama's visit*, WASH. POST (Mar. 7, 2012, 9:34 PM), available at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/post/nc-factory-workers-on-obamas-visit/2012/03/07/gIQAXdSyxR\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/post/nc-factory-workers-on-obamas-visit/2012/03/07/gIQAXdSyxR_blog.html) (Attachment E).
4. And last year, President Obama toured a Chrysler plant in Toledo, Ohio before addressing assembled workers—including James Fayson, a line worker at the plant,

who was also featured in a video produced by President Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. Sheena Harrison, *'James the Jeep Worker' to be face of campaign*, Toledo Blade, June 3, 2011 (Attachment F).

### Conclusion

For the aforementioned reasons, this Complaint should be dismissed and no further action taken.

Sincerely,



Kathryn E. Biber, General Counsel  
Megan L. Sowards, Deputy General Counsel

0404-1144001

**Table of Attachments**

- A. Marc Kovac, *Beallsville crowd sides with Romney*, DAILY RECORD, Aug. 15, 2012, at A1.
- B. Romney: *'This Is a Time for Truth' About Coal*, THE STATE JOURNAL (W. Va.), Aug. 17, 2012, at 5.
- C. John Schmid, *Obama visits Master Lock to celebrate return of jobs*, MILWAUKEE J. SENTINEL, Feb. 15, 2012.
- D. Lindsay Kus, *Vice President Biden Tours GR Company; Talks Insourcing*, FOX17ONLINE.COM (Feb. 1, 2012, 9:28 AM), available at <http://www.fox17online.com/news/fox17-vice-president-biden-tours-gr-company-20120201.0.6637633.story>.
- E. Mary C. Curtis, *N.C. factory workers on Obama's visit*, WASH. POST (Mar. 7, 2012, 9:34 PM), [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/post/nc-factory-workers-on-obamas-visit/2012/03/07/gIQAXdSyxR\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/post/nc-factory-workers-on-obamas-visit/2012/03/07/gIQAXdSyxR_blog.html).
- F. Sheena Harrison, *'James the Jeep Worker' to be face of campaign*, TOLEDO BLADE, June 3, 2011.

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## Attachment A

*Beallsville crowdsides with Romney Daily Record (Wooster, Ohio) August 15, 2012  
Wednesday*

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Copyright 2012 Dix Communications Group  
Daily Record (Wooster, Ohio)

August 15, 2012 Wednesday

SECTION: A; Pg. A.1

LENGTH: 555 words

HEADLINE: Beallsville crowdsides with Romney

BYLINE: MARC KOVAC; By MARC KOVAC

BODY:

BEALLSVILLE -- Alexander Stephen lives about 15 minutes away from American Energy Corp.'s century mine, where he has worked for a year and a half or so.

He makes the trip every work day to the site, near the border of Belmont and Monroe counties.

He's not alone. Mines in southeastern Ohio's Appalachian coal country employ thousands of people. For those willing and able to work, it's often the only employment available.

"This is the biggest thing in this county and the surrounding areas," Stephen said Tuesday while waiting to hear GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney. "... And if you took away this coal mine, the soup kitchen line would be a mile long. ... That's what it means to these people here today."

Stephen was among the 1,500-plus people who were on hand Tuesday for the first stop on Romney's bus tour through Ohio.

Though protests were scheduled in the vicinity by groups that are supporting President Barack Obama, the mine yard was filled mostly with Romney supporters showing little love for the incumbent. Routes through the area were dotted with signs declaring the importance of the industry and chastising the president for his "War on Coal."

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The Obama campaign has countered such assertions, calling the president the only "candidate in this race" that "actually has a record of finding a clean future for coal."

Spokeswoman Lis Smith said in a released statement, "President Obama has increased investments in the research and development of clean coal technology and employment in the mining industry hit a 15- year high in 2011. This stands in stark contrast to Mitt Romney, who, as governor of Massachusetts, spoke out against coal jobs and said that a coal-fired plant 'Kills people.' This is just another issue where Mitt Romney is not being honest with the American people."

Such comments have not swayed Romney's supporters, like Deborah White and her husband, David, who made the trip to Ohio from their home in Pennsylvania a couple of hours away.

They grew up in the coal fields of southern West Virginia, and David White has worked in the industry for more than three decades. They're backing Romney.

"We're here to support the miners here in Ohio," she said. "... We're here to support people who want to vote [Obama] out of office. If he gets another term, there will be no coal mines left. There will be no communities left once he gets through with them."

Pressed on the environmental concerns, David White said, "I'm an environmentalist. I hunt, I fish, I love the woods, I love the water. The regulations allow for a mediation of that so that you still have clean water, clean streams, clean air, but you don't have to go to where you actually shut operations down, shut industry down, because basically what you're doing is bankrupting America."

Many Romney supporters voiced concern about increased federal regulations that have stifled coal and other industries. Republican state Rep. Andy Thompson, from Marietta, said he has heard estimates that coal production in his part of the state is down by one-third.

"The oxygen's being cut off at both ends," he said. "They're not being allowed to produce, and they're not being allowed to burn in the utility plants. So the war on coal is real."

Marc Kovac is the Dix Capital Bureau Chief. Email him at [mkovac@dixcom.com](mailto:mkovac@dixcom.com) or on Twitter at [OhioCapitalBlog](https://twitter.com/OhioCapitalBlog).

LOAD-DATE: August 16, 2012

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## **Attachment B**

*Romney: 'This Is a Time for Truth' About Coal The State Journal August 17, 2012 Friday*

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The State Journal

August 17, 2012 Friday

SECTION: Pg. 5 Vol. 28 No. 32 ISSN: 1521-8767

ACC-NO: 12305

LENGTH: 583 words

HEADLINE: Romney: 'This Is a Time for Truth' About Coal

BODY:

### **ABSTRACT**

Jack Chaffee, a coal miner, said he attended the event to hear where the Republican candidate stands and whether he supports the coal industry.

### **FULL TEXT**

BEALLSVILLE, Ohio - Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney brought his campaign to Appalachian coal country Aug. 14 to discuss the importance of coal to the nation, its economy and its future.

Romney made three stops in southeastern Ohio, starting at American Energy Corp.'s Century mine in Beallsville, which is roughly an hour west of Wheeling, before traveling on to Zanesville and Chillicothe. While at Century mine, Romney spoke to a crowd of several hundred miners and their families about the economy.

He said President Barack Obama was misleading voters by claiming new jobs in coal producing regions. Romney also promised to make the nation independent of oil from Venezuela and the Middle East.

"By the end of my second term, I'll make this commitment: We will have American, we will have North American energy independence," Romney said. "We won't have to buy oil from Venezuela and the Middle East. We're going to be independent."



Standing not far from a bulldozer filled with coal and decorated with a sign that read, "Coal Country Stands With Mitt," Romney accused Obama of lying to voters in this coal-rich region.

"He (Obama) talks about how wonderful it is and how we're adding jobs in the coal industry and adding more coal," Romney said. "I thought, you know, how in the world can you go out there and just tell people things that aren't true. This is a time for truth. If you don't believe in coal, if you don't believe in energy independence, then say it."

Romney said he thinks Ohioans are hopeful but scared, and living paycheck to paycheck. He pointed out that 23 million Americans are unemployed, and that Obama seems to be targeting coal as something negative.

He said he has a list of five things he wants to do if elected, the first of which is to take advantage of the nation's energy resources followed by rescuing public education, developing a trade policy that works for America, balancing the budget and encouraging small business growth.

Romney was applauded by hundreds of coal miners and their families who were brought in by buses.

Halley Mallet, 11, said she attended the event to support her father, who is a coal miner, and all coal miners.

"It's sort of scary because every day he goes underground and he sort of risks his life because anything could happen to him," she said.

Jack Chaffee, a coal miner, said he attended the event to hear where the Republican candidate stands and whether he supports the coal industry.

"That's very hard to find because, well, as it stands right now, it's not looking good for us, and we're trying to do everything we can to keep our jobs," Chaffee said. "I agree with 100 percent of his speech. ... It's about time."

Deborah White's husband worked in coal for 33 years, and she said she thinks Obama is working to destroy the industry.

"He is decimating West Virginia and Pennsylvania and Ohio, all of the coal states in essence," she said.

Her husband, David White, said he agreed.

"It's good to see that there's people that still believe in industry that believes in coal," he said.

Cassie Demchak, whose husband is a coal miner, attended the rally and said she was happy

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to hear what Romney had to say.

"I think we need jobs in America, and that's not being done right now," she said. "I want my husband to keep his job. It's a wonderful, wonderful job. We have a great life."

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## Obama visits Master Lock to celebrate return of jobs

By John Schmid of the Journal Sentinel  
Feb. 15, 2012

The sticker, strategically plastered on a crate stacked as a prop behind President Barack Obama, communicated nearly as much as the president did in an entire speech Wednesday.

"Made in the U.S.A."

Those four words, in full view of the television cameras, summed up the policy goals that Obama outlined to a throng inside the flagship factory of Master Lock Co., the 91-year-old Milwaukee manufacturer that moved about 100 jobs back from China over the past 18 months.

"This company has been making the most of a huge opportunity that exists right now to bring jobs and manufacturing back to the United States of America," Obama said. "Today, for the first time in 15 years, this plant is running at full capacity."

Make no mistake: the new jobs at Master Lock represent a fraction of the jobs that were annihilated over three decades in a city with a machine-shop economy. And they're negligible in a nation that lost a third of its factory employment in the decade that preceded the 2008-'09 recession.

But at a time when Detroit automakers are staging a partial comeback, when labor rates are rising in China and India, and after America added manufacturing jobs for two consecutive years - a feat not seen since 1997 - the opportunity to promote a "made-in-America" boomlet clearly proved irresistible for the White House incumbent in an election year.

### Asian wages up

While state Republican Party Chairman Brad Courtney dismissed the appearance as "a taxpayer-funded campaign stop in his quest for re-election," the president underscored what economists and executives call a slight but hopeful tilt in the trade equilibrium.

Wages are rising rapidly in China and India - nations that only a few years ago seemed to harbor inexhaustible supplies of cheap labor, said Avik Chakrabarti, an economics professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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Meanwhile, China has engineered a 30% weakening of the dollar against the yuan in the last seven years, which automatically raises the price of China's imports into the U.S.

For Obama to exhort American managers to capitalize on the exchange rate swing is consistent with U.S. policy that predates Obama, said Brian Jacobsen, a Menomonee Falls-based economist at Wells Fargo Bank. Only under unrelenting pressure from Washington has China incrementally allowed the exchange rate to move.

Labor moves more fluidly than ever around the globe, Chakrabarti said. While Obama uses the term "insourcing," Chakrabarti speaks of "bi-sourcing" in what has become a perpetual two-way movement of labor in moves dictated by raw business calculations.

"U.S. workers are more competitive globally than they have been in a quite a while," Jacobsen said.

"Over the last few years, it's become more expensive to do business in countries like China," Obama told the crowd. "Meanwhile, American workers have become even more productive."

For the past two months, Obama has elevated Master Lock as a poster child of insourcing. He lauded the company in his annual State of the Union speech.

As long as trade calculations tilt in favor of the U.S., the president said he'll push for job creation in this country - even if multinational companies have a wide range of offshore options.

"Our job as a nation is to do everything we can to make the decision to insource more attractive for more companies," Obama said to applause. "That's our top priority, that's our top priority. We've got to seize this moment of opportunity."

Obama's newest economic refrain - to bring back manufacturing jobs - follows his failure last fall to win support for a different economic policy: a proposed \$447 billion job-creation bill, dismissed by Republicans as the "son of stimulus."

One unmistakable message of the insourcing initiative is that it's as patriotic as it is economic - a theme seen throughout the Master Lock facility. "Made in American with pride," read signs throughout the factory.

"It's important to bring patriotism into the equation," said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

### Technology firm opening

Another guest who touted the patriotism of hiring at home was William Robichaud, chief executive of Collaborative Consulting LLC, a Boston-based technology firm that opened a satellite office in Wausau this month. The firm plans to hire 200 Wisconsinites for programming jobs that otherwise would end up in India, China or the Philippines.

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"We will win and we will bring more jobs back," Robichaud said.

"It's patriotic," he said, adding that his father fought in World War II.

"In India, salaries in the middle class are doubling every three years," Robichaud said. "It's getting closer to the American price point."

Going by statistics alone, few cities made a better backdrop to discuss manufacturing than Milwaukee.

Wisconsin leads the nation in the proportion of its workforce involved in manufacturing. And the state's greatest concentration of factories lies in metro Milwaukee, with production that ranges from motorcycles and power generators to high-end medical imaging equipment and sausage. Among U.S. metro areas with a minimum of a half million non-farm jobs, metro Milwaukee consistently shows up with the second-highest share of its workforce in manufacturing, behind San Jose, Calif.

Taxes, jobs and economic policy are usually the stuff of bitter partisan fights in Wisconsin, a politically divided battleground state. On Wednesday, the opportunity to support the state's manufacturing economy prompted several leading conservatives to declare a temporary ceasefire.

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, the business lobby that only rarely supports Democratic Party policies, issued a statement to "commend" the president.

"I applaud the president's recognition of U.S. manufacturing's continued importance," said WMC President Kurt Bauer. "The sector is the largest in Wisconsin and remains the backbone of family-supporting middle-class jobs."

### Walker's welcome

Republican Gov. Scott Walker also kept politics to a minimum Wednesday. Greeting Obama at the airport, Walker presented Obama with a Milwaukee Brewers jersey. Walker and Obama shook hands, chatted briefly and chuckled.

"We're certainly pleased the president's here," Walker said. "We love manufacturing. That's our No. 1 industry. The bottom line is, we're one of the biggest, most dependent on manufacturing of any state in the country."

Echoing other recent speeches, Obama called on Congress to enact tax incentives for companies that create jobs in the U.S. and to strip away tax breaks for companies that shift production to other nations. He also touted a program of worker retraining and his creation of a Trade Enforcement Unit to police trade agreements, enforce U.S. intellectual property rights and bolster exports.

Speaking to a prescreened and mostly partisan crowd, he defended a position that's unpopular among many liberals: his willingness to negotiate and sign free-trade agreements with developing-world rivals - a move he argued helps his administration's goal of doubling U.S.

exports over five years.

"Pretty soon, there are going to be millions of new customers for American goods in places like Panama and Colombia and South Korea," he said. "I want new cars on the streets of Seoul, South Korea, imported from Detroit and Toledo and Milwaukee."

Obama said: "Everybody benefits when manufacturing is going strong."

### Urban survivor

Master Lock is a survivor in the heart of one of the poorest sections of the poorest inner cities in the nation. City officials were pleased that the president drew attention to an urban core that usually gets attention only with violent crime and drug busts. Obama didn't mention the miles of idle factories surrounding Master Lock but did comment on the pain of unemployment for the nation at large.

"We're still recovering from one of the worst economic crises in three generations," he said. "I'm not going to lie to you guys. We've still got a long way to go."

To prepare for Obama's visit, Master Lock idled machinery and moved much of it out of the way to make room for a temporary stage and risers.

To make up for lost production, Master Lock chief executive John Heppner quipped that "I can always bring a few locks from China," where the company continues to operate factories.

The crowd responded with a resounding "Booo!"

*Don Walker of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.*

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## FOX 17

### Vice President Biden Tours GR Company; Talks Insourcing

Lindsay Kus

FOX 17 News Reporter

9:28 AM EST, February 1, 2012

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich

Vice President Joe Biden spoke to hundreds of workers at American Seating Wednesday to discuss the Obama Administration's latest plan to offer tax credits to keep manufacturing jobs in the United States.

"It was a huge honor, it felt great, we've been in business 125 years, the vice president being here just adds to that history," said Michael Smith, who works on the factory floor.

Nearly 200 employees attended the event, putting down their tools and equipment for the morning.

Vice President Biden took a brief tour of the factory, located at 801 Seward Avenue NW, before giving his speech. He told the crowd manufacturing is essential to America's economic recovery. He used the factory as an example of a business that has kept jobs in America,

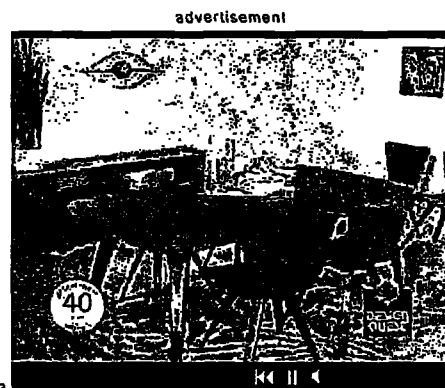
"The most productive workers in the world are found right here in Grand Rapids, in Michigan, in America," said Vice President Biden.

"Businesses like American Seating should be rewarded for keeping jobs here."

The 125-year-old plant, which employs nearly 500 workers in the Grand Rapids area, manufactures seats for buses, trains, stadiums, and concert arenas. They've never had to outsource jobs and everything is made in the U.S. The company purchases 75 % of its raw materials from Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.

<http://www.fox17online.com/news/fox17-vice-president-biden-tours-gr-company-20120201,0,253035,print.story>

10/7/2012



Attachment D

"It's a great place to work, I've been with the company 38 years, it's been hard with the economy, " said Tellis Brown, a union worker who pulls parts. He is happy to have a steady paycheck.

"American Seating's mission is to make seats and other furniture for everyday people, for just about every public setting imaginable," said American Seating President Tom Bush. "We're pretty proud that we've been doing that for more than 125 years, right here in the same location, right here in Grand Rapids, Michigan, made-in-America workforce."

As part of the re-election campaign, President Obama is proposing to eliminate tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. The president highlighted his plans in his latest State of the Union Address. Just last week, President Obama was in Michigan speaking with students in Ann Arbor about affordable higher education.

This is Vice President Biden's second stop in Grand Rapids in six months. In October, he visited Central High School to talk about job creation.

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Posted at 09:34 PM ET, 03/07/2012

## N.C. factory workers on Obama's visit

By Mary C. Curtis

Mount Holly, N.C. — Is it true that you can't turn the corner in North Carolina without running into an Obama, or does it just seem that way? Last week it was First Lady Michelle Obama in Charlotte on the basketball court and at fundraisers. On Wednesday, it was the president, touching down for a brief visit to this town that went against him in 2008.



President Barack Obama tours the Daimler Trucks North America Manufacturing plant prior to speaking on the economy and jobs in Mount Holly, North Carolina. (SAUL LOEB - AP/GETTY IMAGES)

Though polls show improving but still tough numbers, Obama might have a better chance next time in this red part of a swing state he carried — if the only ones voting were the employees that came in before the second shift at the Daimler Trucks plant.

The company that was once laying off workers and on its last legs is now turning out 100 trucks a day and employing over 1,400, with

1,000 hired or re-hired in 2011. Obama — looking relaxed — used the backdrop of big trucks to announce tax credits for fuel efficient vehicles that use advanced technologies and incentives to communities that invest in them.

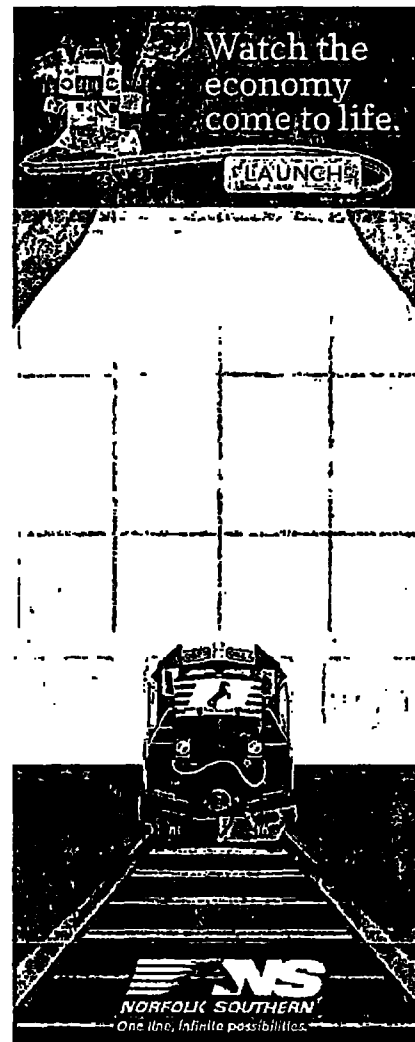
The president didn't mention Republican Super Tuesday primary battles, but after calling for an end to subsidies for oil companies, he tweaked "phony election-year promises" — a charge his GOP opponents have been taunting him with — and "some politician trotting out some 3-point plan for \$2 gas." He also offered some medical advice when someone fainted: "You've always got to eat before you stand for a long time. That's a little tip."

The president wasn't the only one sharing opinions.

A Detroit refugee, Brandon Quinn, 32, still wears his big "D" Detroit Tigers cap proudly, and rooted for the Lions "when they only won three games a season." The 10-year Navy veteran wanted to work in the auto industry when he returned home in 2008, but followed his mother to North Carolina to find a job.

Three months ago, he was hired as an inspector at Freightliner. "Things are getting better," he said. "I'm even hearing good things from my friends in Detroit."

"I'm not going to lie. I didn't vote for him," he said of Obama. "If you asked me four years ago if I would ever vote for him, I would have said, 'No.' Now, I can't say. I want to hear more good things — the deficit and unemployment going down, jobs going up."

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"How can you not respect the guy? He takes everything, whether it's his fault or not." Of GOP front-runner Mitt Romney, Quinn, a registered Republican, said he hasn't formed an opinion one way or the other. "I'm supposed to like him because he's from Michigan?"

Quinn said he lives pretty frugally — "I make my own salsa; everything comes from my garden except the cilantro." — and is both cautious and optimistic about the economy. "We're making 100 trucks a day, the president's here. I guess I see the brighter side of things."

When his co-workers get into heated political arguments, he said, "I just sit there and grin." During the president's speech, Quinn perked up when Obama talked about incentives for buying the kind of trucks the company makes. "He's passionate about what he says," Quinn said of the president. "He's not stumbling like Romney was when he was talking about Michigan."

## Finding happiness on the line

When a truck comes by her on the line, it's Molly Costner's job to tie down the chassis. On Wednesday, her audience was the president. "I was nervous," she said, "but only at first." She said he was very nice and remembered her by name when he left his tour.

Costner, 39, said President Obama's visit is good for business, and "so he knows what we do." For the six-months-working new hire, the message is "jobs, jobs, jobs." The Republican is a big supporter of her UAW local and wore a shirt that said so: "If you sell it here, build it here. Buy American. Buy union."

Costner said she's turned off by "the mudslinging" in the GOP primary contest. "I like decent people," she said. "I want to know the president has people's best interest at heart." And while she hasn't yet made up her mind about her vote, she is a definite fan of the first lady. "I think she's beautiful and classy."

## A lay-off veteran

Travis McDowell, 55, who assembles trucks, has been working at the plant since 1998 — on and off. "I've been laid off quite a few times," he said. He moves around to where the jobs are, and worked for a time at the Cree LED lighting company visited by Obama last June.

The Obama supporter said he works with people, "jokes with them," but finds they "don't want to give the president any credit." He feels the office of the president has been disrespected since Obama's held it, and recited a litany of examples that started with Rep. Joe Wilson shouting "You lie!" as the president addressed the Congress.

McDowell sees Obama as having done a lot for the economy, and said he didn't even mind the bank bailouts. "The truck companies wouldn't have the money to borrow without it."

He said some of his colleagues were mad when they first heard the president was coming, until they found out they would be paid even for the time the line was shut down.

Mary C. Curtis, an award-winning multimedia journalist in Charlotte, N.C., is a contributor to *The Root*, *Fox News Charlotte*, *NPR* and *Nieman Watchdog* blog. She has worked at *The New York Times*, *Charlotte Observer* and as national correspondent for *Politics Daily*. Follow her on Twitter: @mcurtisnc3

By Mary C. Curtis | 09:34 PM ET, 03/07/2012

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WASHINGTON POST

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Printed Sunday, October 07, 2012

**'James the Jeep Worker' to be face of campaign****Man featured in video for Obama re-election effort**BY SHEENA HARRISON  
BLADE BUSINESS WRITER

Democratic officials decided that James Fayson's layoff and return to work was the right story to tout President Obama's auto bailout. Mr. Fayson, a production operator assembler at the Toledo Assembly complex, says he was nervous but added, 'I pretty much spoke from the heart.'

"Joe the Plumber" was one of the top symbols of the 2008 presidential election. Now, get ready for "James the Jeep Worker" in 2012.

James Fayson, a production operator assembler at Chrysler Group LLC's Toledo Assembly complex, is set to appear in a video directed for President Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. The Toledo resident, 36, has spent 14 years working at the complex, which has a group of factories that make Jeep Wrangler vehicles and a factory that makes Jeep Liberty and Dodge Nitro vehicles.

President Obama is in Toledo Friday to tour the Wrangler plant -- next to the one where Mr. Fayson works -- just more than a week after Chrysler repaid \$7.6 billion in federal bailout loans. The President is expected to tout the success of the 2009 automotive bailouts.

A source familiar with the Obama campaign confirmed that Mr. Fayson participated in a video for the President's re-election campaign. Details of the video, such as when and

where it will appear, were not provided.

A film crew followed Mr. Fayson for several hours Wednesday, he said, documenting his daily routine outside work and interviewing him about his automotive career, as well as his support for the government-backed turnaround of Chrysler and General Motors Co. In his interview, Mr. Fayson said the federal bailout allowed him to return to work late last year after he was laid off from Chrysler in 2009.

**OBAMA'S INTENDED ITINERARY**

- Making his first trip to Toledo since his election in 2008, President Obama is to fly in to Toledo Express Airport this morning, trek to Chrysler Group LLC's Toledo Assembly

"I'm very thankful to be back to work, and it's only because of the decision that the President made to save the auto industry that I was afforded [the chance] to come back to work," Mr. Fayson said.

He will be one of the Chrysler workers attending Friday's ceremony with the President.

Bruce Baumhower, president of United Auto Workers Local 12 that represents the Toledo Assembly workers, asked Mr. Fayson to participate in a conference call with reporters last week as Chrysler paid off its bailout loans.

Mr. Fayson's story of being laid off and returning to his job after the bailout was touted by state and national Democratic officials on the call, including U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo), as an example in defending the automotive bailout.

Mr. Baumhower said Mr. Fayson's story is representative of other automotive workers who were forced to make tough career decisions as the Detroit Three automakers worked toward recovery.

complex, possibly make two or three other stops, and then depart from the airport by late afternoon.

- It is not known what roads or highways may be closed because of Mr. Obama's visit.
- The events are not open to the public.
- A detailed agenda of the nation's leader hasn't been disclosed for security reasons. However, he will tour the Chrysler plant that makes Jeep Wranglers off Stickney Drive by early afternoon. At 1:30 p.m., he will talk to assembled workers and others, including Chrysler Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne and community, political, and labor dignitaries.
- He is expected to tout the resurgence of the U.S. auto industry and give credit for that to his federal bailout, which assured the survival of Chrysler and General Motors Co. Both automakers filed for bankruptcy protection in 2009 to enact severe cutbacks and other changes. Now, both firms are profitable.
- After the event, the White House said he will talk to local business owners and residents.



President Obama will visit Chrysler Group LLC's Toledo Assembly Complex Friday.

"Many of them had to decide to take a buyout and walk away from their automotive career, or remain on layoff and hope to someday return, not knowing if the company would survive and, if it survived, would they be apart of it," Mr. Baumhower said.

Mr. Fayson said he was "nervous and excited" to be involved in the campaign video.

"I couldn't sleep the night before because I knew they were coming," said Mr. Fayson, who began filming at his house with the camera crew at about 4:30 a.m. Wednesday.

Mr. Fayson said he looks forward to seeing the video when it eventually airs.

"To have a documentary on me was a different experience," he said. "And I pretty much just spoke from the heart."

Contact Sheena Harrison at: sharrison@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.

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